

Sweet Auburn
United States Highways 84 and 98E
Washington vicinity
Adams County
Mississippi

HABS No. MS-200

HABS
MISS,
1-WASH.V,
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SWEET AUBURN

HABS No. MS-200

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MISS,
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6-

Location: United States Highways 84 and 98 East, Washington vicinity, Adams County, Mississippi.

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Roland N. Scott, Washington, Mississippi 39190.

Present Use: Dwelling:

Significance: From 1828 until his death in 1851, Sweet Auburn was the home of Dr. John W. Monette, a notable physician, scientist and historian.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Between 1811 and 1828.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a partial and incomplete chain of title to the land on which Sweet Auburn stands. It is taken from the Adams County Landmarks Inventory compiled by the Natchez Metropolitan Planning Commission. See Parcel 21, Block 2, Tax Map 175, and the Adams County Deed books - see also, American State Paper (Gales and Seaton Edition).

1805 April 26, 1805. Certificate No. A-56, American State Papers. The subject site ... was entered by Joseph Calvit under certificate No. A-56, a claim based on a Spanish patent of 386 f. (Spanish acres) granted to Joseph Calvit on June 19, 1788.

1810 December 31, 1810. Deed (DB H/267). Benjamin Bealk from Joseph Calvit. Conveys: 200 acres on the clear fork of St. Catherine's Creek, 1/4 mile northeast of the Town of Washington, ... and will defend against all claims (except claims derived from the British Government).

1811 January 3, 1911. Deed (DB F/272). Beverly R. Grayson from Benjamin Bealk. Conveys: a tract on St. Catherine's Creek ... and will defend against all claims except claims derived from the British Government of West Florida.

1811 March 2, 1911. Deed (DB F/413). Leonard Covington from Beverly R. Grayson and his wife Sarah ...

1828 April 5, 1828. Deed (Q/203). John W. Monettee from Levin Covington and Benjamin Covington, heirs.

- 1878 July 27, 1878. Deed (DB WW/82). Trustees of Jefferson College from John W. Monette, heirs. Conveys: all that tract of land within the town of Washington known as "Sweet Auburn" except the family graveyard ...
- 1891 September 7, 1891. Deed (DB 3G/312). Mrs. Bessy M. Ratcliffe, wife of W. H. Ratcliffe, from Trustees of Jefferson College.
- 1939 December 12, 1939. Will (WB8 p. 385). Estelle L. Winston and Wallace H. Ratcliffe from Mrs. Bessy M. Ratcliffe: devise to my niece Estelle L. Winston and stepson Wallace H. Ratcliffe L. Winston and stepson and residence "Sweet Auburn" ... and give and bequeath all furniture and articles of personal property it contains.
- 1842 June 22, 1942. Deed (DB 50/210). Alfred N. Dearing from Miss Estelle L. Winston. Conveys: one-half interest in "Sweet Auburn" ...
- 1953 December 29, 1953. Deed (DB 7H/129). Mrs. Janette F. M. Swinny wife of William Swinny from Mrs. Nannie Louise Dearing, widow. Conveys: part of the original "Sweet Auburn" ...
- 1970 January 24, 1970. Deed (DB 11K/443). Rowland N. Scott and wife Adelaide from Mrs. Janette F. M. Jones, formerly Mrs. Swinny, same tract as above ...
4. Original plans and construction: The plan originally consisted of a center hall flanked by two large chambers. The rear section contained an open loggia with stairs, flanked by two cabinets.
5. Alterations and additions: Since their purchase of the house in 1970, the current owners have added a large room across the rear of the structure

B. Historical Context:

From 1828 until his death in 1851, Sweet Auburn was the home of Dr. John Wesley Monette, a distinguished physician, scientist, and historian. His significant accomplishments include writing the "History of the Discovering and Settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi" (New York: Harpers, 1847), and advocating and publicizing the benefits of quarantine in controlling yellow fever epidemics. Monette also served as mayor and councilman of Washington, Mississippi.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Sweet Auburn is a good example of the formal, one-story house typical of the 1820s and 1830s.
2. Condition of the fabric: Good.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The five bay, one and one-half story building is rectangular in shape.
2. Foundations: Stuccoed brick.
3. Walls: The walls are brick, painted white.
4. Structural system: The masonry walls are load-bearing.
5. Gallery: A one-story gallery runs along the front and sides.
6. Chimneys: The two block chimneys are stuccoed and scored.
7. Openings: An elliptical fanlight spans the double-leaf front entrance doors and the adjacent side lights. Each door has four panels. The double hung windows are topped by brick jack-arches and carry louvered blinds. The glazing is twelve over twelve.
8. Roof: The hipped roof is covered with shingles. The dormers are double-hung with six over six glazing. The dormer windows are flanked by provincial pilasters.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: The center hall is flanked by two principal chambers. The rear loggia with stair now enclosed is flanked by two small cabinets. A recent rear addition runs the full length of the house.
2. Stairways: The ballusters and newel of the single flight stairway are simple.
3. Flooring: Pine.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: The doors are paneled with architraves above which terminate in bull's eye corner blocks.

6. Decorative features: Mantels with engaged, Doric columns support a full entablature and shelf.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The house faces east in a rural, lightly wooded setting.
2. Outbuildings: Two small brick dependencies, one of which served as Dr. Monette's study, flank the main building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Subject File. Dr. John W. Monette.

Franklin L. Riley, ed. Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society. Oxford, Mississippi. Vol. IX, pp. 199-201.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was coordinated by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Elbert R. Hilliard, Director. Data compiled by William C. Allen, Architectural Historian, April 1975.

Edited by Marion K. Schlefer for the Historic American Buildings Survey, Washington, D.C., 1985.